

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 SY-05 MCT-01 USSS-00 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 SS-15 NSC-05 PRS-01 PA-01 USIA-06
FBIE-00 L-03 H-01 /056 W
-----111348Z 004616 /46

P 111239Z JAN 77
FM AMEOBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6194

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 0268

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORS, ASEC, PINS, VE
SUBJECT: NIEHOUS KIDNAPPING

19 PROMINENT STORIES IN CARACAS PRESS REPORT THAT ON THE BASIS OF SEVERAL ANONYMOUS TELEPHONE CALLS RECEIVED EARLY JANUARY 8, THE VENEZUELAN POLICE (PTJ) HAVE UNDERTAKEN A SEARCH IN ANZOATEGUI STATE, 150 MILES EAST OF CARACAS, FOR THE BODY OF KIDNAPPED U.S. INDUSTRIALIST WILLIAM NIEHOUS. THE BODY WAS REPORTEDLY ABANDONED IN A RUGGED AREA BETWEEN ARAQUA DE BARCELONA AND SAN PABLO. ACCORDING TO THE STORIES, AUTHORITIES HAVE ORGANIZED AN INTENSIVE EFFORT TO VERIFY THE REPORTS, BUT A CONTINUING SEARCH OF THE COUNTRYSIDE HAS TURNED UP NOTHING. PRESS ACCOUNTS OF NIEHOUS' ALLEGED DEATH SPECULATE OVER THE MOTIVE BEHIND THE REPORTED CALLS. ONE DAILY SUGGESTED THAT A DISGRUNTLED EX-MEMBER OF THE GUERRILLA GROUP, BANDERA ROJA, MAY HAVE SOUGHT TO COMPROMISE HIS FORMER COMRADES THROUGH ADVERSE PUBLICITY.

2. COMMENT: IT APPEARS THE STORIES ABOUT A PTJ SEARCH ARE VASTLY EXAGGERATED. APPARENTLY THE PTJ DID RECEIVE A PHONE CALL BUT IT PROVED TO BE A FALSE ALARM. BOTH THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR AND GOVERNOR OF ANZOATEGUI STATE HAVE DENIED THAT A PTJ SEARCH WAS CONDUCTED. THERE IS A SEARCH
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GOING ON IN TRUJILLO STATE (ABOUT 250 MILES WEST OF CARACAS) WHICH IS BEING CARRIED OUT BY THE INTERIOR MINISTRY'S SECURITY SERVICE (DISIP), RATHER THAN PTJ, ALTHOUGH ELEMENTS OF THE LATTER MAY HAVE BEEN UTILIZED FOR DIGGING. THIS SEARCH WAS PROMPTED BY OTHER EARLIER INDICATIONS AND NOT, REPEAT NOT, BY A RECENT TELEPHONE CALL. END COMMENT.

3. IN RELATED STORIES, EL NACIONAL JANUARY 10 AND 11
REPORT A RECENT INTERVIEW WITH DONNA NIEHOUS IN NEW JERSEY
AND OHIO. PAPER REPORTS THAT MRS. NIEHOUS' VENEZUELAN
I.D. CARD, TAKEN THE NIGHT OF THE KIDNAPPING, WAS RETURNED
TO WILLIAM COLEMAN BY DEPUTY FORTUNATO HERRERA. ALONG WITH
A PHOTO OF THE I.D., THE PAPER PUBLISHED A COPY OF AND
EXCERPTS FROM MR. NIEHOUS' LETTER OF JUNE 25 TO THE WIFE.
IN THE INTERVIEW, MRS. NIEHOUS STATED THAT SHE CAN
IDENTIFY ONE OF THE KIDNAPPERS AND THAT HE IS NOT AMONG
THOSE PUBLICLY IDENTIFIED BY THE GOV.

4. COMMENT: MRS. NIEHOUS' INTERVIEW, ALTHOUGH GIVEN
A FULL PAGE SPREAD IN EL NACIONAL, CONTAINED LITTLE NOT
PREVIOUSLY KNOWN. ONE NEW ELEMENT IS MRS. NIEHOUS'
ASSERTION THAT HER I.D. CARD WAS RETURNED TO HER
THROUGH DEPUTY HERRERA. THE LETTER IS ONE WE KNEW
ABOUT. END COMMENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: KIDNAPPING, DEATHS, POLICE INVESTIGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 11-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Disposition Remarks:
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From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770164/aaaacdx.d.tel
Line Count: 81
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Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Exemptions: n/a
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Review Release Date: n/a
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